

## PREPAREDNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

(or “Document! Document! Document!”)

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The “Always be prepared” motto is a good one for radio-tv technical consideration. Here are some of my favorite applications of the rule:

1. Have a backup plan or, better yet, actual backup equipment in place. Having thought through ways to react in a sudden emergency can reduce panic when the inevitable happens. Put these down on paper, not just for yourself, but also posted in the engineering office or at the transmitter. Then, if you are unavailable, someone else will have a valuable head-start. Keep it updated as you replace or add equipment or have new ideas about things.
2. In this digital and smartphone age, take photographs of all equipment so you can remember what the settings were or which LEDs are normally lit up and what those digital meters were reading when things were working right.
3. Have your own troubleshooting procedures in writing to remind you or, especially, to help a substitute who might have to tackle a serious problem without you. Block diagrams of how things are hooked up can speed up troubleshooting or even have a series of observation steps to analyze.
4. Keep detailed Maintenance Logs. Whenever you have worked through a failure or crisis, enter the steps you took and what you learned in the process. You may need to refer to that information the next time it happens. If you computerize such documentation, you can even do a “keyword search” at ‘panic time’. Create a Maintenance Log form that reminds you of the things needed to be done each time.
5. Keep available a list of names and phone numbers of other engineers, consultants, and your equipment’s manufacturers (including manuals).
6. Be observant! When you arrive at the transmitter site, take few minutes to look around. Were gates and tower fences properly locked? Is there any evidence of tampering or someone having been there? Any storm damage since the last visit?
7. Do a quarterly check of tower(s) and tower lights (keep binoculars handy). If it is a guyed tower, check the anchors and soil or cement around them. If the tower sits on an insulator (AM towers) inspect the insulator for cracks or other damage. Photograph or at least visually check the turnbuckles to be sure they are secure with room to adjust when needed. *(Do not try adjusting them yourself - Leave that job to professionals.)*
8. Keep a few cold cans of *Starbucks Espresso* Doubleshots in a nearby refrigerator to keep you alert!!!